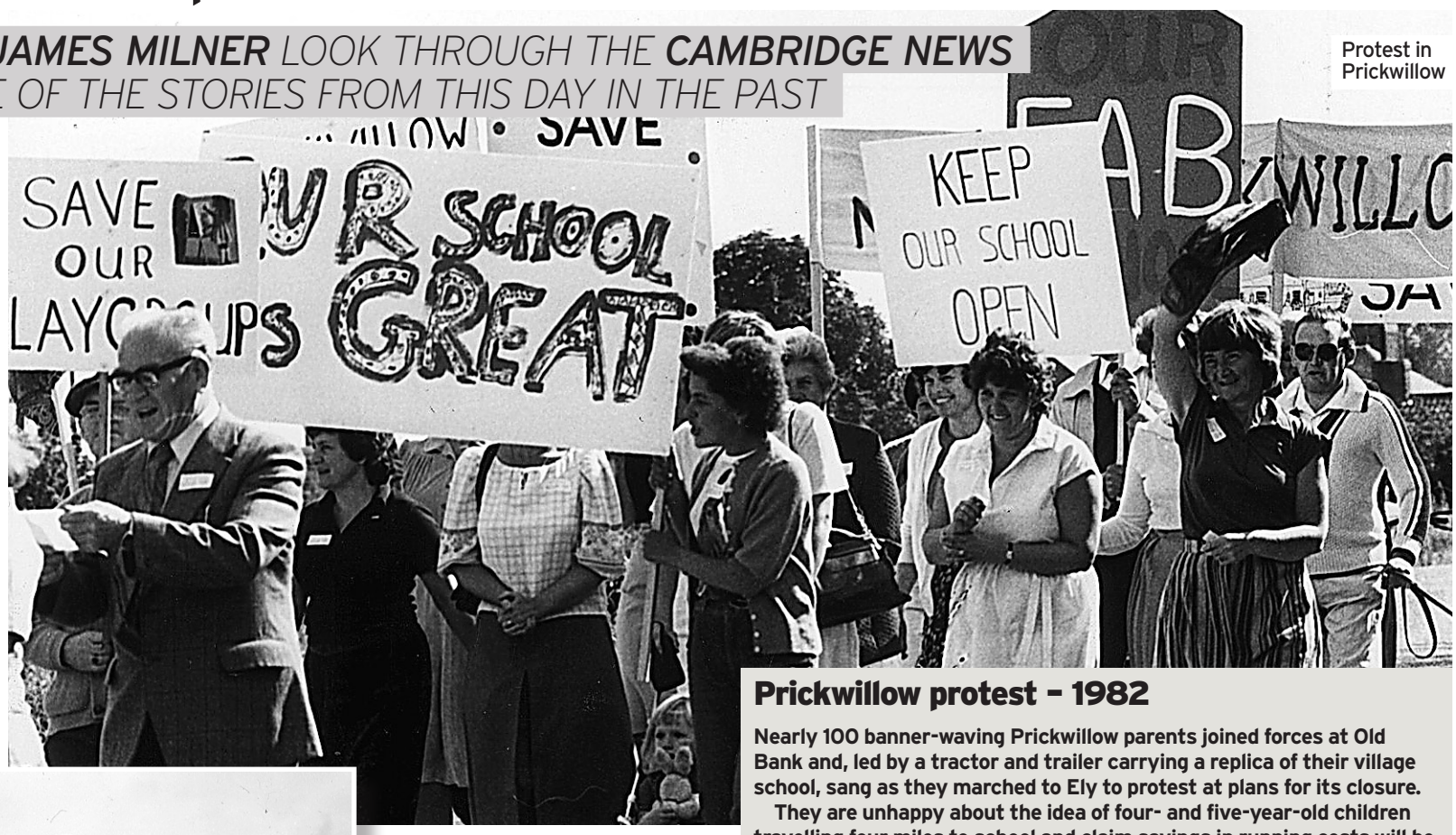
NOSTALGIA

A tale of two stations, progress ends the pickle and car wars

***MIKE PETTY** AND **JAMES MILNER** LOOK THROUGH THE **CAMBRIDGE NEWS** ARCHIVES AT SOME OF THE STORIES FROM THIS DAY IN THE PAST*



Protest in Prickwillow

Prickwillow protest – 1982

Nearly 100 banner-waving Prickwillow parents joined forces at Old Bank and, led by a tractor and trailer carrying a replica of their village school, sang as they marched to Ely to protest at plans for its closure.

They are unhappy about the idea of four- and five-year-old children travelling four miles to school and claim savings in running costs will be eaten up by the price of transport.

Lonely journey on the Ely line... 1964

A journey on the fated Ely-Newmarket railway line shows why it has become the victim of Beeching's axe.

The only regular traveller is a British Railway employee who uses it to get home to Fordham.

Two people got on at Ely – both BR staff – and the only other passengers were an American couple touring Britain. There was nobody waiting at Soham or Fordham.

Sometimes, up to 30 people get on the Ely-bound station at Soham before changing trains to Cambridge but mostly only a few people use it.

...but always busy at Barnwell – 1960

Barnwell Junction seems the perfect model of a small Victorian railway station with its lacy wooden canopy and the initials of the Great Eastern Railway intertwined among the cast iron legs of its platform seats.

Train at Barnwell Junction

It has two passenger trains a day but handles 30,000 tons of merchandise and minerals a year including sugar beet, grain and potatoes, malt from Barnwell Maltings and scrap iron from the railway's own engineering depot.

Its one porter, Mr Bidwell, keeps the platform swept and is also gardener, handyman and weekly replenisher of the oil lamps in the semaphore signals.

Fordham station

Dusty going at organ overhaul – 1949

For over 10 years, the inside of the Cambridge Guildhall organ has remained almost untouched, except for a few occasional minor adjustments, but now, for the first time since the Guildhall was rebuilt in 1938, it is having a really good overhaul and cleaning.

Six weeks have already passed since the day two skilled local craftsmen, Mr Walter Hall and his son, first started on their great task, which is expected to take at least another week.

To the layman, this may seem a very long time to take in cleaning it, but those who know anything at all about organs will realise the amount of work that is actually involved.

Already four buckets of dust have been removed along with various items hardly associated with the interior of an organ.

Guildhall ball on brand new floor – 1947

In the words of Councillor Frank Priest, "the new floor of the Cambridge Guildhall is well and truly laid".

This brief ceremony was performed last night at the first ball of the season, and what a delight it was to dance on such a new and beautifully polished floor.

One couple, probably so unaccustomed to such smoothness in Cambridge, were rather too enthusiastic and found themselves, quite unintentionally, making a seat on the floor.

It is thought that some of the shoes and hob-nail boots worn by dancers during the war years was the reason for the bad state of the previous floor.

Guildhall ball in 1952

Cheap boots – 1936

When John Brown took charge of Freeman, Hardy & Willis shop on Market Hill in 1897, boots were cheap, and needed to be.

John Brown said: "I can remember country women coming in with a dozen children and saying their husbands only earned twelve shillings a week." When he started, brown boots were so scarce that people stopped and gazed at someone who sported a pair in Peterborough.